

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Executive Manager – Governance
To: Standards Panel – 22 March 2017
Author: Lynn Eldred, Lead Democratic Services Officer
Subject: Standards Annual Report – 2016/17
Purpose: The Panel is asked to note the Standards Annual Report 2016/17

Recommendation(s):

To note the Standards Annual Report for 2016/17.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the meeting of full Council on 27 June 2012, the arrangements for dealing with complaints against members were approved in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and implemented with effect from 1 July 2012.
- 1.2 As part of the arrangements, it was agreed that the role of monitoring Standards issues would be delegated to a Standards Panel. The Standards arrangements adopted by the Council also require that an annual report is presented to the Standards Panel. This report provides information relating to work undertaken since the previous annual report made to the Standards Panel in April 2016.
- 1.3 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new role of Independent Person to provide advice and guidance to the Monitoring Officer and members who are the subject of an allegation. Mr Tony Wicks undertakes this role for South Holland District Council.
- 1.4 The following table details the number of complaints that have been received in 2016/17 and the relevant outcomes along with figures from recent years:

Stages of complaint	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Complaints received	1	10	6	5
Complaints not relevant to Code of Conduct	2	4		3
Complaints withdrawn				1
Resolved under informal resolution and matter closed				
Referred to Police	6			
Initial information in the process of being sought	2	2	3	1

Stage 2 (Formal consideration of a complaint)				
Considered by Monitoring Officer to not merit further consideration	3	4	2	
Referred to Standards Panel as deemed inappropriate for Monitoring Officer to consider				
Resolved through informal resolution			1	
Stage 3 (Investigation)				
Referred for investigation and failure to comply found				
Referred for investigation and <u>no</u> failure to comply found				
Hearing Panel's held				
Hearing Panel finds failure to comply				
Hearing Panel finds <u>no</u> failure to comply				
Cases where sanctions recommended and accepted by District / Parish Council				

2016/17 figures include 4 District Complaints and 1 Parish Complaint.

1.5 **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON – MR TONY WICKS**

During the past twelve months, I have, on several occasions acted as Independent Person for Breckland District Council. This came about as a result of the Independent Person there registering a conflict of interest with either the subject member or the complainant. It was a useful exercise and gave an insight into the type of issues raised elsewhere. One of the issues has not been resolved and has resulted in a standards hearing which is due later this month.

I attended an Independent Person workshop recently and two main issues were discussed one being the lack of sanctions and the second relating to the ongoing problems with the misuse of social media. The matter of sanctions is to be raised nationally with the appropriate body in the near future.

Apart from the above my involvement in South Holland District Council issues has been relatively quiet.

2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 The report is for noting.

3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 The Standards arrangements adopted by the Council require that an annual report is presented to the Standards Panel.

4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 In receiving an annual report, members of the Standards Panel are kept informed of complaints received and are able to identify trends.

5.0 **Constitution & Legal**

5.1 The report ensures that the Council complies with its Standards arrangements and the roles and responsibilities of the Standards Panel as set out in the Constitution. The Council's arrangements are in line with the requirements placed upon it by the Localism Act 2011.

6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 All.

7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 None.

Background papers:- None.

Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post: Lynn Eldred, Lead Democratic Services Officer
Telephone Number: 01775 764626
Email: l Eldred@sholland.gov.uk

Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Mandatory Service

Appendices attached to this report:

None.